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ABSTRACT

Multiethnic education programs are viewed as a force in promoting crossethnic interaction. The interaction can be measured by identifying whether students select friends from different ethnic groups to which they are exposed when participating in a multiethnic education program. Fifty-two students, ages 7-13, from three ethnic groups (Korean, Chinese, and Philipino) at the Graeme Stewart School in Chicago who were enrolled in a multilingual, multiethnic program were examined. A two-part questionnaire, color-coded by ethnic group, was administered to students at the beginning of the program and again six months later. A chi-square test of the responses showed significant gains for the Chinese and the Philipino students in their crossethnic selections of best friends and in their ability to name students from other nationalities. The Korean students showed similar but not significant results. The observed ethnic differences of the results are attributed to a difference in language preference. (Author/ND)

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The Effects of a Multi-Ethnic Educational Program Upon the Selection of Best Friends.

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Multi-ethnic education programs are viewed as a force in promoting cross-ethnic interaction. 52 students of three different ethnic groups (Korean, Chinese, Pilipino) were given a two-part questionnaire at the beginning of their participation in a multi-ethnic program and again six months later. A chi square test showed significant gains for the Chinese and Pilipino students in cross-ethnic selections of best friends and in ability to name students from other nationalities. The Korean students did not show these significant results. The observed ethnic differences in reaction to the program were attributed to a difference in language perference.

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THE EFFECTS OF A MULTI-ETHNIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM UPON THE SELECTION OF BEST FRIENDS

Inter-racial contacts are needed to improve the understanding of individuals of different groups (Bradley; 1963). According to Amir (1969) and Van Til (1958), this can best be accomplished through inter-group education which emphasizes interpersonal association regardless of race or ethnicity. It gives distinct ethnic groups an opportunity to interact and form stable patterns of relations without super-subordination (Noel; 1938) and is an important tool in improving relations.

Durojaiye (1969), in a mixed-ethnic junior school in a multiracial area of Manchester, found that the length of attendance at school was a factor associated with the selection of friends and leaders. In an integrated elementary school, substantial cross-racial choices were observed in choices of playmate, seatmate, and working companion (Jensen and Gallagher; 1966). Khatena (1970) studied high school and college students from three major cultural groups of Singapore (Chinese, Malays, and Indians) by using a questionnaire concerning their intercultural relationships. Results suggested that the interaction of the diverse cultural forces would in likelihood lead to the transformation of cultural singularity if continued longer.

Robertson and Kawwa (1970) studied friendship patterns in a cosmopolitan secondary comprehensive school and found that as pupils grow older their friendships are more likely to cut across grade levels and to cover a wider geographical range. An ex-

perimental group of graduate students at the University of Southern California showed greater ethnic understanding and interaction after a six-week workshop (Bogardus; 1950).

The Colton Joint Unified School District attempted to develop an educational program for all students regardless of race, religion, or cultural background in order to assimilate different cultures into a whole (California State Department of Education; 1968). Alioto (1971) pointed out that the multi-culture educational program founded in 1969 by Sussna in California promoted interaction among students of various racial and ethnic groups. With this rationale the Graeme Stewart School in Chicago initiated a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic program.

The Graeme Stewart School is located in Uptown, one of Chicago's most ethnically diverse community areas. According to the Student Racial Survey, Board of Education of the City of Chicago (September 30, 1974), out of a total school population of 892 students, 421 (47.2%) are listed as Caucasian and other (including a large Appalachian white population), 122 (13.7%) Black, 35 (3.9%) American Indian, 65 (7.3%) Mexican American, 144 (16.1%) Puerto Rican, 6 (.7%) Cuban, 16 (1.8%) other Spanish-surnamed American, and 83 (9.3%) Asian American. School statistics indicate that 26% of Stewart's students speak a language other than English in the home and that 99.94% of the students are eligible for the free breakfast and lunch program.

A Spanish bilingual program had been initiated during 1972-73, and in September, 1974, a proposal was approved for State of Illinois supplementary bilingual funds to assist in the implemen-

tation of the Transitional East Asian Magnet (TEAM) program serving the needs of the four largest Asian language groups represented in the Chicago public schools: Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Japanese, Korean, and Pilipino. The project was developed cooperatively by members of the Asian community and local school staff, based upon the recommendations of parents who responded to a needs assessment survey.

It was expected that cross-ethnic selections of best friends would increase through participation in a multi-ethnic program because the intergroup contact would provide the students with a chance to know each other better. Additionally it was hypothesized that the chance to know each other better would increase the student's ability to name students from various ethnic groups.

Method

Subjects were those students, aged 9-13, enrolled at Stewart School full-time who had parental consent to begin the half-day program for language and cultural studies. (Additionally, a few students were bussed from "feeder" schools as part of the magnet concept to reach the program target population). The participating students attended TEAM classes from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and returned to their homeroom classes in the afternoon for instruction in the content areas.

Only those students who participated in the program from the beginning were included in the study. Since many of the Japanese students were Japanese-American and spoke only English, the Japanese sample size was only three. The findings, therefore, will discuss only the interrelationships among the Chinese,

Korean, and Pilipino students. The linguistic-ethnic breakdown is: Chinese, 18; Korean, 14; Pilipino, 20. (Total N=52). There were linguistic differences among the groups. The Pilipino and Chinese students were, as a whole, bilingual. The Koreans, however, depended mostly upon their native language[1].

During the third week (October 4, 1974) that the program was in operation, the students were given a color-coded (by ethnic group) two-part questionnaire. Part A asked participants to list their five best friends in the bilingual center. Part B asked participants to list the names of five Chinese, five Japanese, five Korean, five Pilipino, and five Spanish[2] students. On April 10, 1975, a six-month interval, the same questionnaire form was re-administered. It should be noted that during the six-month period sub-groupings shifted several times and room groupings changed as well. For the first three months, the Pilipino and Korean students shared one classroom and the Chinese and Japanese students shared another; for the second three months the Pilipino and Japanese students shared one classroom and the Chinese and Korean students shared the other.

Results

Two by two chi square of independence with Time (pre/post) by Nationality (own/other) were utilized to analyze the data.

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[1]This assertion is based upon six observations for interaction analysis, and an interview with the Korean teacher.

[2]The same forms were given to Spanish students who, in future analysis of these data, may comprise a comparison group. For this study, there will be no further consideration of the Spanish students.

The Pilipino and Chinese students showed significant increases (Pilipino $p<.01$, Chinese $p<.001$) in the number of best friends chosen from nationalities other than their own. Korean students did not show this increase in other-group best friends.

Further analyses with Time (pre/post) plotted against the four nationalities (Chinese, Korean, and Pilipino) were statistically significant for all nationalities. The three groups for which data were collected (Chinese, Korean, Pilipino) chose more Japanese-Americans as best friends which reflects the increase of Japanese-American students in the program over the time period studied. Also, the Chinese chose more Pilipino friends, the Pilipino chose more Korean friends and the Koreans chose more Chinese and fewer Pilipino friends.

The ability to name five students of different nationalities increased for all groups studied. The chi square test performed on number of students named, pre and post, was highly significant for the Chinese ($p<.005$) and the Pilipinos ($p<.001$). The overall increase for the Koreans was very slight and therefore not statistically significant (in fact, there was a slight decrease in the Korean's ability to name Pilipinos).

Discussion

The findings of this study tend to support the theory that participation in a multi-ethnic program will increase the number of other-ethnic-group friends and acquaintances. Statistically significant increases in the number of other-group best friends and in the number of students of other nationalities named were observed for the Chinese and Pilipino students. This change was

not observed for the Korean students. It should be noted that the Korean students depended mostly on their native language whereas both the Chinese and Pilipino students were able to communicate readily in English.

When the nationalities of the other-ethnic-friends were considered, the change in the breakdown to choices was significant. The increase in Japanese-American students chosen as friends is no doubt an artifact of the increase of Japanese-American students in the program.

The change in Korean students' best-friend choices parallels the change in classroom grouping: For the beginning months the Koreans shared a classroom with Pilipino students, and later in the program the Koreans were grouped with the Chinese. For the post condition, Korean choices of Pilipino best friends declined and Korean choices of Chinese best friends increased. The slight decline in the Koreans' ability to name Pilipinos also occurs with the change in classroom grouping.

Both the Chinese and the Pilipinos showed a great increase in their ability to name Korean students (chi square p .0001). The pretest performance in naming five Korean students was poor which presented the opportunity for much improvement (which was, indeed, observed). The pretest performance can perhaps be attributed to communication difficulties since the Koreans depended mostly upon their native language.

In summary, after participation in a multi-ethnic program students who could communicate readily in English showed a significant increase in cross-ethnic selections of best friends and in

ability to name students from various ethnic-groups. This other-ethnic-group familiarity and friendship included not only other students who spoke English readily but also those students who preferred a non-English native language.

Students who depended upon a Non-English native language did not show these significant increases in other-ethnic friends and acquiantances.

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